

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 00726 191129Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05
CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOE-11 H-01 INR-10
INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06
OES-07 SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 PA-01
/140 W

-----056683 191614Z /40

R 191046Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7520

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 0726

E.O. 11652: GDS

TZJGS: ENRG, TC

SUBJECT: MORE PROBLEMS WITH DAS ISLAND GAS LIQUEFACTION PLANT

REF: 77 ABU DHABI 3229

1. SHORTLY AFTER FIRST TRAIN OF LNG PLANT AT DAS
ISLAND WAS PUT BACK INTO OPERATION AFTER FIVE
MONTH CLOSEDOWN TO REPAIR CHRACKS IN STAINLESS
STEEL PIPING (REFTEL), ENTIRE LNG OPERATION HAS
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BEEN CLOSED DOWN SINCE MARCH 11 UPON DISCOVERY OF
GAS LEAK FROM ONE OF TWO LNG STORAGE TANKS. LNG
IS STORED IN A DOUBLE TANK WITH INNER TANK COMPOSED
OF NICKEL ALLOY AND OUTER TANK, ABOUT ONE METER
AWAY FROM INNER TANK, OF STEEL PLATE. CRACK HAS
APPEARED ON OUTER TANK CAUSING GAS TO COME OUT BUT
NO LIQUID.

2. BP HAS BEEN PUT IN CHARGE OF SUPERVISING INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHAT HAS HAPPENED. IT APPEARS THAT SOMETHING HAS OCCURRED AT BASE OF ONE OF LNG STORAGE TANKS BUT IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE CAUSE EXACTLY UNTIL OUTER SHELF OF TANK IS PARTLY DISMANTLED, A MAJOR UNDERTAKING. BOTH BECHTEL AND CHIYODA, WHO WERE MAIN CONTRACTORS, AND IHI, WHO WAS SUB-CONTRACTOR, HAVE BEEN IN LONDON WITH TEAM EXPECTED ARRIVE AT DAS IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

3. ON MARCH 18, AFTER LNG REMOVED FROM STORAGE TANK, BOTH LNG TRAINS WERE STARTED UP AGAIN. PRODUCTION WILL BE STORED IN ONE STORAGE TANK THAT IS OPERATING. THEREFORE, THERE SHOULD NOT BE ANY DELAY

IN MEETING SCHEDULED SHIPMENTS, OR REQUIREMENT FOR LNG CARRIERS CARRYING DAS ISLAND LNG TO TIE UP AGAIN.

4. UAE PETROLEUM AUTHORITIES ARE UNHAPPY OVER THIS LATEST BREAKDOWN AND LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS. BECHTEL MAY BE IN FOR SOME TOUGH QUESTIONING. EMBASSY UNDERSTAND FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT ON CAUSES OF CRACKS IN STAINLESS STEEL PIPING WILL BE ISSUED AT END OF MONTH. IT IS EXPECTED THAT
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REPORT WILL INDICATE THAT HEAT TREATMENT OF PIPING SHOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE IMMEDIATELY AFTER WELDING OCCURRED AND NOT MONTH OR MORE LATER WHEN ALL MAJOR PIPE INSTALLATIONS RECEIVED HEAT TREATMENT.
DICKMAN

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NNN

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